TFF

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What Future for Islam in Europe?

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like, first of all, to thank the organizers of this conference for their kind invitation - the Valencia Chapter of the Club of Rome and the Islamic Cultural Center of Valencia. My connections with the Club of Rome are profound, as I was one of its earliest and youngest members thirty years ago, just as I had the honor of being one of the three co-authors of its second and very successful Report: *No Limits to Learning* (1979) which has been translated into 12 languages. Being in Valencia as a guest of the Islamic Cultural Center of this city has a great deal of historical significance to a Muslim.

A good part of my research work has been devoted to future studies.[1] In 1990 I helped organize, in Algiers, the first conference on *"Islamic Futures"* which convened a number of Muslim scholars and academics. There was a consensus at that meeting that Islam had reached its lowest point in history because it has concentrated too much on the past and not opened its eyes on the future. Such opinions, when stated by prestigious theologians like El Ghazzali (now deceased), Ghannouchi, Tourabi, El Qaradaoui and many others, highlight the challenges ahead. The first clarification which emerged is that Islam was a religion which attaches importance to the "future" to be distinguished from the "ghaib" (the unknown).

It was also agreed that the top priorities for the future were the eradication of illiteracy, the elimination of poverty, through a more equitable distribution of resources within and between countries[2], and a much greater investment in

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[1] More than 700 entries in a Google search for "elmandjra future" in addition to the Presidency of the World Future Studies Federation and of Futuribles International. In relation with our subject see in particular "Islamic Futures" (1990) **< http://www.elmandjra.org/Futures.htm>**

[2] The income in the Muslim world varies from $ 20.000 dollars per capita in Kuwait and United Arab Republic down to around $ 400 dollars in Nigeria, Mauritania, Bangladesh and Mali (World Bank figures for the GNI per capita, Atlas Method and PPP for the year 2004),

scientific research, if the Muslim world is not to remain backward and unable to fulfill its objectives.

What future for Islam in Europe?

How to work out the relationship between these three terms ? That is the difficult task that I shall try to attempt. When you make a search with "*www.google" for "Islam"* you find 19,700,000 entries; when you combine *"Islam*" and *"Europe"* you get 14,900,000 references. These quantitative indications demonstrate the vast scope of the subject. Within less than fifteen years, the number of Muslims in geographical Europe will represent 210 million people or 12% of the total Muslim population in the world.

A French philosopher has recently said that the next wars will be semantic. If you can impose the meaning you choose for words you have gained such wars. The question mark at the end of our topic is not superfluous. What are the different connotations of "Islam" in Europe today in the official discourse and the media ?

In future studies, the future is always open-ended and so is the "problematique" with which we are concerned in this Conference - to use a term which was very dear to Aurelio Peccei, Founder of the Club of Rome.

The Muslims are fully aware of their problems and their solutions but, most unfortunately, a deceiving complicity between their unrepresentative and corrupt leaders, a part of an opportunistic and mercenary "elite", and the governments of the West with the United States at their head - a most efficient combination - has prevented them from bringing about peacefully the changes required.

I have said on many occasions and I repeat it today that no Western Power is ready to accept the emergence of truly democratic regimes in the Muslim world. Such a change would wipe out the benefits which the present corrupt regimes offer them.

These matters do have a direct relationship to the "future of Muslims in Europe". I believe that the implications of this analysis have more relevance for the future of Muslims in Europe than any local European political impositions or new legislations which are more and more emerging to limit the fundamental civil rights of Muslims and non-Muslims alike.[3]

An editorial of the French newspaper "Le Monde" speaking about the "*Islam du juste milieu*", in its reference to the recently established "CFCM" (French Council of the Muslim Cult") qualified it as an institution "*imposed from the top - provisionally - with a bureau co-opted in advance"*.[4] As it is very easy to observe none of the mechanisms set up so far in the European countries to "manage" the Muslim populations is truly representative. How can you teach democracy with undemocratic and discriminatory means? A strange resemblance of what takes place in the Muslim countries themselves.

I have often written that I know of no regime in the Muslim world which could stay in power for more than a very few years without the backing of the Great western powers. I go further and foresee that none of the present regimes in the is likely to remain in power more than five to ten years from now unless they undertake fundamental changes in harmony with the authentic desires of their population.

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[3] The less democratic of these legislations is the recent law adopted by the House of Commons in the country which the first one to agree to the "Habeas Corpus" three hundred and twenty six years ago.

[4] Le Monde, Paris, 21 June 2005.

The future of Islam in Europe will evolve in function of at least two determinants: the future of Islam world wide, on one hand, and the future of Europe on the other. I believe that with respect to the Muslim community living in European countries one is as important as the other.

I am not talking, as it has become fashionable in certain circles, about "*European Islam*" or "*Western Islam*" because there is only one Islam - a religion whose main purpose is to unify through the integration of diversity and not to divide. This unity is represented by the concept of the "Oumma" - The Nation where the boundaries are more spiritual and socio-cultural than geographical.

The notion of the Nation-State which was born in Europe after bloody religious wars is now being slowly eroded as that continent discovers the advantages of unity. This unity is being carried out through various schemes whereas the Muslim world has been for many decades the object of Western dividing policies which fragment its population continuously particularly since the end of the Ottoman Empire and up to this day.

The demographic fear

Let us examine a few figures concerning the demography of various religions[5] in the world:

- Christianity: 2.1 billion
- Islam: 1.6 billion
- Secular/Nonreligious/Agnostic/Atheist: 1.1 billion
- Hinduism: 900 million

[5] Source : http://www.adherents.com/Religions_By_Adherents.html

• Chinese traditional religion: 394 million
• Buddhism: 376 million
• Primal-indigenous: 300 million
• African Traditional & Diasporic: 100 million
• Sikhism: 23 million
• Spiritism: 15 million
• Judaism: 14 million

Let us not forget that the Arab world represents only 20% of the total world Muslim population. The present and the future of Islam are both in Asia.

The total fertility rate of the Muslim world is slightly above 3 children per woman and 30 percent of its population is under 15 years of age. By way of comparison, Western Europe has a fertility rate of 1.6, which is below replacement, and only 17 percent of its population is under 15. Hence the problem is not only quantitative but also qualitative when comparing the age pyramids. This is why according to the United Nations, Europe will need 159 million immigrants between 2000 and 2025. Where will they come from?

Here is the present distribution of Muslims as a percentage of the total population in some European countries according to *The Economist* (London, 3 April 2003):

7.0% in France

3.9% in Sweden

3.4% in Germany

3.4% in Belgium

2.7% in United Kingdom

2.0% in the Netherlands

2.0% in Denmark

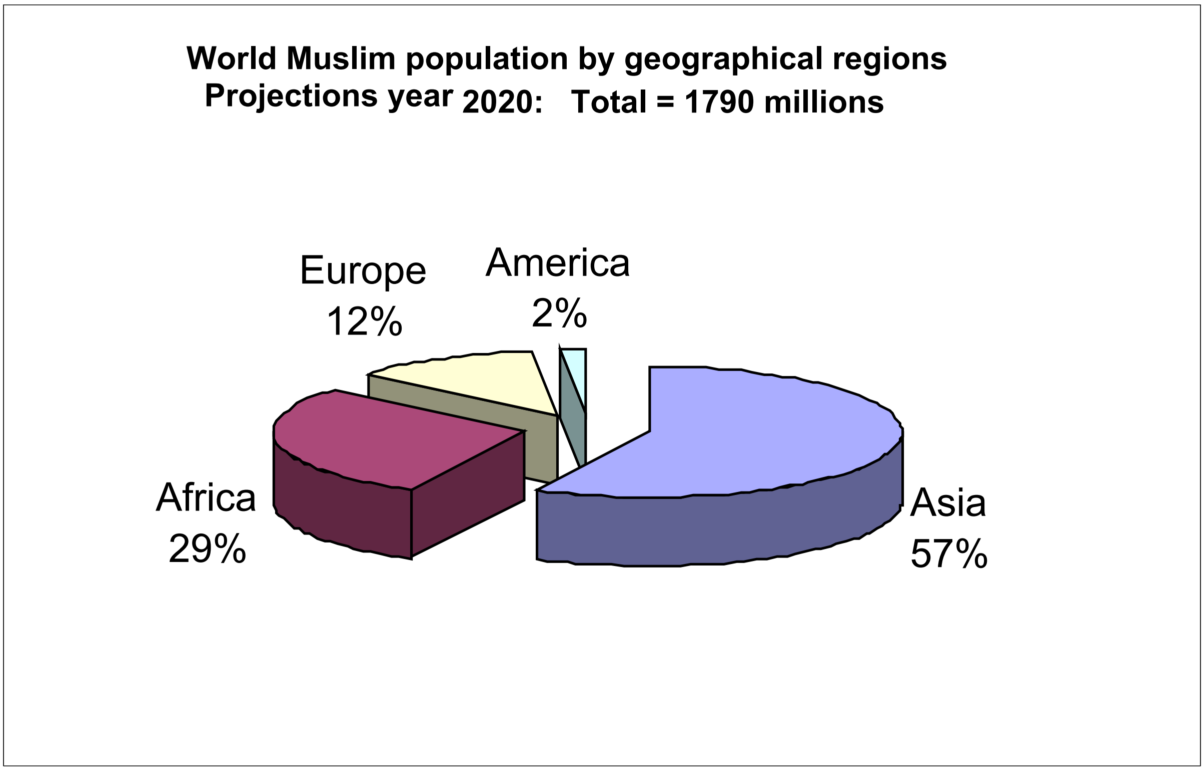
1.6% in Norway

1.4% in Italy

1.1% in Spain

Only three days ago, the Spanish daily "ABC", dated 12 September 2005, had an article entitled "*La pression de Nuestro Islam*" which referred to a secret report indicating that Muslims will represent a majority of the population in the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla before the year 2018.

The immigration trends to Europe denote first of all the great dissatisfaction of those who leave countries that have failed to provide a minimum quality of life. This is a fact which can not be ignored nor underestimated. Yet it is these same countries who find a backing for their socio-economic systems in the West. Projections of the Muslim population in the world by the year 2020 by region (estimates in millions): **Asia :** 1010; **Africa:** 510; **Europe** : 210; **America** : 30



What about Turkey ?

If Turkey is to be considered a part of the Europe we would have to account for 70 million more Muslims which will become 80 millions within twenty years - more than Germany which is presently the most populated member of the European Community. Where is secular Europe? In 1959, two years after the signature of the Treaty of Rome, Turkey applied for membership. It applied again in 1987. In December 1999 its candidature was endorsed by the Heads of States meeting in Helsinki.

Five years later, in December 2004, the members of the European Community decided to open negotiations about its membership. President Chirac and Chancellor Schroeder then spoke of the year 2015 as a "perspective" for the taking of a decision. The fundamental reason for such delays and hesitations is the fear of the impact of the Turkish Muslim population on the evolution of Europe - a problem of socio-cultural values. Michel Rochard (President of the Commission of Culture in the European Parliament) wrote,

"Turkey has what can scare. It is the third world, it is Islam at our door step. It is 66 million inhabitants, a little more than England, Italy or France. In thirty years it will not be far from 100 million inhabitants exceeding thereby Germany which is the first country of the Union"[6].

The Turks and the Turkish immigrants living in Western European countries as well as all Muslims in Europe see the outcome of this issue as a vital one for their future and for mutual tolerance.

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[6] Le Monde, 27-11-2002, yet the title of the article was a plea in favor of the admission of Turkey for essentially "geo-strategic" reasons.

Islamophobia

Way back in June 1980 in the French Television Program "*Les Dossiers de l'Ecran*", devoted to the "Prospects of the Decade of the 1980's", I said that the West had three obsessions: demography, Islam and Japan. The picture has slightly changed today with respect to demography and the fear of Japan has been replaced by that of China.

Today, ten years later, this obsession has lead to *Islamophobia* and *phobiocracy* whereby fear has become a key factor in the approach of Western decision makers and yet, it was an American President, Franklin D. Roosevelt,, who during the Second World War emphasized that "*the only thing to fear is fear itself"*.

In its report, *Islamophobia*, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) reported that the biggest rise in violent attacks had taken place in Britain, Holland, Sweden, and most of all Denmark. Women wearing headscarves *had been "insulted, spat at, beaten and even raped in a wave of attacks across Europe, causing many to stop wearing the garment in public"*[7].

According to figures compiled by Islamic organizations in the United Kingdom, the rate of attacks on British Muslims since 11th September 2001 is more than thirteen times higher now than in a typical year. The new legislations which are being enacted throughout Europe are not making things any easier for Muslims and severely limit the rights of all of its inhabitants.

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[7] EUMC monitored the period from 11 September 2001 until the end of December 2001.

To avoid any polemics, I shall not insist at length on the attacks on Islam proffered by high statesmen and politicians in Western Europe;[8] by writers whose works have become best sellers overnight nor by a number of well known journalists who have specialized in attacks against Islam. Such an approach may be counterproductive and I shall limit myself to a few illustrative examples. The Minister of the Interior of France - the European country which has the greatest number of Muslims on its soil - said, in a conference held last week, that the solutions required with respect to integration are

"that we help the Muslims of France to build themselves an identity, in a country which has both a Judeo-Christian tradition and which is deeply laicized." [9]

I quote below the statement made on 18 September 2005, by the Italian Ministry of Justice of a country in which almost one million Muslims live. What justice are they to expect?

EFE Venice - The Italian minister of Justice, Roberto Castelli, attacked Islam yesterday, affirming in Venice, on behalf of his party (North League), that "we are not against Islam, but it is Islam which is against us and wants to suppress us… But in the end we will conquer it, because the conscience of the town of Padano (the town of Castelli) has awoken", the vehement attorney-general said. In his hard criticism of Islam, Castelli adopted tones of the Crusades and went back to the battle of Lepanto, of October 7, 1571, when Spanish troops, of the Papal States and of the republic of Venice, under the command of Spanish Juan of Austria defeated the Turkish fleet."[10]

As someone who has lived thirty years in the West (10 years in the United States, 4 in the United Kingdom and 20 years in France), I can personally vouch that there is a marked degradation in the attitudes towards Muslims who suffer severely from this radical change. The future of Muslims in Europe is affected

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[8] One of the latest examples is the statement made by Philippe de Villiers, President of the Movement for France who when announcing, on 11 September 2005, his candidature for the Presidency of France for the future Presidential elections of the year 2007. He said, "My program consists in the prevention of the islamization of France". He added that this was the supreme goal that he will try to attain. (speech transmitted directly by the French Television LCI).

[9] Le Monde, Paris, 13/09/2005.

[10] Translation by the author of a dispatch of the Spanish News Agency EFE dated 19-09-2005. This quote has been added to this text and is posterior by very few days to the date when this conference was delivered.

by this new trend which will hopefully evolve to a greater understanding and tolerance in the future so as to ensure a minimal human dignity. This will take time … much time.

Luckily there are other European voices, like the one of Ken Livingston, the Mayor of London, who, in a meeting of the Trade Union Congress on September 12, blamed President George W. Bush's policies for creating a "clash of civilization" between Muslims and the West adding that his "*right-wing neo-con establishment*" has triggered such a *"clash of civilization*". He also warned that the combating of Islam would only strengthen the extremist Islamist movements. [11]

The deep wounds of the Muslim collective memory

* The millions of victims of the wars of liberation from colonialism.
* The scars of the Palestinian combat for freedom such as the thousands of dead of Sabra and Chatila. The "Camp David" style of peace which is not working and will not work, nor the media-related comedies such as those we have witnessed in recent days concerning the so-called liberation of the Gaza strip which has mobilized about 6.000 people from the different media. Let us not forget the daily inhuman acts perpetrated against the Palestinians throughout the "occupied territories," including Jerusalem which the second most sacred site for Muslims.
* The war started in 1991 against Iraq and which has so far produced, directly and indirectly, around 2.000.000 victims,
* The Afghanistan war and its countless victims not to speak of its fictitious elections and "democracy".

[11] BBC News on line, London (13 September 2005).

* The war in former Yugoslavia with its thousands of victims of Srebrenica alone.
* The Chechen war for independence and its innumerable dead which are difficult to itemize but must be counted in the thousands.

The list can go on and on. Over 10 million Muslims have lost their lives during the last fifteen years due to “delocalized” wars and provoked civil strife. As a comparison we may note that total number of victims of all the Crusades, have been estimated to amount to around 100.000.

It will take generations before these wounds can be healed. It is not too early to start thinking about educational programs for the emerging generations in Europe to help them develop a more positive attitude towards each other.
One of the most important factors in the Franco-German reconciliation has been the courageous step taken by General de Gaulle and Chancellor Adenauer in the setting up of commissions to review school textbooks in order to take out expressions of intolerance. This is a scheme that may have to be followed sooner or later in order to reduce the respective resentment within both communities and bring up more tolerant generations through a better cultural communication.

Diversity and unity

Islam calls for a diversity which is conducive to unity. This prescription is enshrined in the holy Quran which says "O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! The noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct."[12]

The Koran speaks of the “People of the Book” - those who have divine scriptures - being Muslims as well as Jews and Christians. This is a clear

[12] Koran (XLIX, 133).

acceptance of religious diversity. As you may know the Koran is still the best-selling book world wide according to the Internet bookstore *Amazon.com*.

The question of allegiance is of great relevance to our topic. A recent survey of the American institute PEW has shown that in the Arab countries allegiance to Islam came way before the one to the nation. In the case of Morocco, for instance, a vast proportion of the population (80%) put Islam first. This allegiance regardless of frontiers, flags national anthems or passports is the cement of the unity in Islam.

Islam is more than a religion. It is first and foremost a vision, a societal project and a system of socio-cultural values. It is a system which defends the principle of cultural diversity. This is one of the reasons of its success and rapid spread because it did not impose a homogeneous cultural system.

Diversity is what gives meaning to unity - a unity which does not exclude the tolerance of all other cultures. The Mahatma Gandhi put it in a nutshell when he said, *" I want the cultures of all Lands to blow about my house, freely as possible but I refuse to be blown off my feet by anyone of them."*

Gregory Bateson, a prominent researcher in the field of communication, has defined information as *"the difference which makes a difference*". "Integration" without the respect of differences can lead to disintegration.

The role and weight of values

I have always emphasized the role of cultural values as essential ingredients of development. During the first North-South panel sponsored by the Society for International Development (SID) in Rome in May 1978, I said,

"*We must address the question of value systems as a matter of priority in order to show that the current crisis between the North and the South cannot be overcome merely through adjustment efforts. In fact, the crisis affects the system as a whole. Any solution therefore requires that the objectives, functions and structures be reconsidered. It also calls for redistribution of power and resources according to values and criteria which must be different from those which brought about the collapse of the current system.*" [13]

On 2 October 1986, in a televised debate with Jean-Jacques Servan Schreiber about the future of international cooperation, on the Japanese station NHK, I stated that *"the causes of future conflicts will be of a cultural nature*".[14]

You can bombard and bulldoze towns and buildings but you can never do the same to values which are the most resistant components in the socio-cultural components of all societies.

The First Civilizational War

When the war against Iraq broke out in 1991, I was interviewed by the German weekly "Der Spiegel". In that interview I spoke of that aggression as being *"the first Civilizational war"*.[15] It was the title I chose for the book which appeared that same year in Arabic and French and later in Japanese[16].

[13] Mahdi Elmandjra, "Political Facets of the North-South Dialogue", Working Paper No. 4, May 10, 1978, SID, Rome .

[14] Seven years later, Samuel Huntington, wrote in the 1993 Summer issue of Foreign Affairs" article entitled "Clash of Civilizations", "It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural» (pp. 48-49). In 1997, Huntington published a book with the same title,"The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order" (Simon and Schuster, Great Britain).

[15] Der Speigel, 15 February 1991.

[16] Al Harb Al Hadariya Al Oulla (Ed. Al 'Ouyoun, Casablanca 1991) & Premiere Guerre Civilisationnelle (Ed. Toubkal, Casablanca 1991), the Japanese edition was publish in the year 2000 (Ochonomizou, Tokyo).

As I have already mentioned above, Samuel Huntington published his article (1993) and his book, "The Clash of Civilizations" (1997) in which he refers to my own book in first sentence of his Chapter 10 which reads *"La Première Guerre Civilisationnelle, the distinguished Moroccan scholar, Mahdi Elmandjra, called the Gulf War as it was being fought"*[17] - that it was the first use of the expression "first Civilizational war".

I would like to stress here the great difference in our two approaches. Mine is a *preventive* one which warns that from now on most of the armed conflicts shall be cultural in nature and that the only solution to avoid them is a better cultural communication[18]. Huntington's thesis is a *prescriptive* one; it identifies the non Judeo-Christian civilizations as the source of the dangers to come.

Suffice is to say that the cost of the Iraq war has already exceeded the cost of the Vietnam war. The Pentagon is spending close to $ 6.000.000 dollars monthly on the operations in Iraq[19]. The number of victims we mentioned earlier (2 million lives since 1991) is increasing daily.

The main aspects of the present backwardness of the Islamic world

The main causes of the backwardness of the Islamic world are: Illiteracy, poverty, quasi-absent scientific research, cultural alienation, an unfair status of women, major restrictions in the field of human rights and freedom of expression. This is an impressive list of obstacles to overcome in the near future

[17] Samuel Huntington, *"The Clash of Civilizations and the remaking of World Ordrer"*, p. 246, paperback edition, Touchstone Books, London (1998).

[11] I was so convinced to this thesis that I set up in 1992 a North-South Cultural Communication Fund which finances a yearly award to someone from the North and another from the South who a made a notable contribution to cultural communication. All the royalties of my writings go into that fund.

[19] See, "Common Center Dreams, News. Center published on September 1, 2005 by the Inter Press Service.

and which presently have a serious influence on the image of Muslims in Europe as well as elsewhere in the world. One can also ask how many of these impediments apply to the Muslim community in Europe.

The illiteracy rates in Islamic countries are the highest in the world. Therefore there is no hope for the Islamic world to improve its condition in the future unless it resolves to wage an effective war against ignorance.

The Muslim world is so poorly informed about itself that it was the Vatican that published in the early 80s the first estimates about the size of the Muslim population on the basis of a survey for which it had mobilized 600 people for 10 years in no less than 200 countries and territories - estimates which showed that for the first time in history the number of Muslims exceeded the number of Catholics in the Word.

The recent history of the Islamic world is still colonized. Its present is not under its real control and even a good part of its future has been mortgaged. The stark reality is that the Muslim world does not yet have a control over its destiny and enjoys only a nominal independence in many areas.

The quasi-absence of scientific research: Scientific research requires a sound academic environment and a solid educational base as well as genuine freedom of expression which fosters creativity and innovation. Unfortunately, scientific research in the Islamic world is attracting only nominal interest and hardly any investment at all. As a result, the brain-drain phenomenon is on the increase with more and more scientists leaving for other countries either in search of better job opportunities or because their initial environment was not propitious for career development and self-accomplishment.

During the Algiers Symposium of 1990 on the “future of Islam” I stressed the key role of women and wrote,

"I strongly believe that the status of women is one of the most pressing and challenging issues with which we are confronted today. We must stand up to the challenge at once, and look for appropriate solutions by relying on ourselves, by using our own resources, by mobilizing all good will forces and by refraining from imposing on women any conditions other than those required of men."[20]

One word summarizes what the 1.6 billion Muslims suffer from: *humiliation*[21]. Humiliation of their leaders by the big powers who then transfer this humiliation on their own populations.

The brain drain

There is a major change in the composition of the immigrants in general and from the Arab world and Africa in particular. In France, the number of immigrants in the category of the "high scientific professions" which represented 2.4% of the total immigrants increased to almost 10% in 20 years.[22] If we take the case of Morocco, 20% of the Moroccan community living abroad has finished secondary school as compared with 10% of those who live in their country.

Brain drain costs the Arab world 200 billion dollars a year according to a recent study published by the Center for *Strategic Studies of the Gulf* in the United Arab Emirates. According to that study the Western countries benefit from 450.000 brains while only 4,5 % of Arab students abroad return home to countries which spend less 0,2 % on scientific research.

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[20] Mahdi Elmandjra, *Islamic Futures, op. cit.* Algiers, 1990.

[21] Al Ihana (Casablanca 2003); L'Humiliation a l'Ere du Mega-Imperialisme, Casablanca 2003).

[22] Diasporas Scientifiques, Institut de Recherche pour le Developpemnt, p. 42, IRD Editions, Paris, 2003.

The Muslim world provides Europe with highly competent researchers whose training has cost the country of origin much more than the so-called assistance to development which it receives. Who aids whom? The immigrants with a higher education level especially in the fields of science, engineering and computer science rarely have any difficulty obtaining a visa nor the necessary papers to work in Europe.

Conclusions

The problem is *not* that of the "future of Islam" which poses no problem as it will continue to thrive as it has for centuries and as confirmed by all demographic indicators.

The real concern is with the "future of Muslims in Europe" - it is partly within their own hands if they show respect for the laws of the countries there are living in. I think that it will be a difficult journey in the short run, the more so as the image of the Western democracies has been badly hurt in the eyes of Muslim in Europe and worldwide. Are there reasons to be optimistic in the long run? God is with those who are patient.

Robert Fisk wrote an article in *The Independent* entitled "We have long ago lost our Moral Compass, So How Can We Lecture the Islamic World? [23]" That is the question, as Shakespeare may have said. The problem of ethics is probable one of the most important when examining the question of the future of Islam in Europe.

Let me conclude with a vital cultural statistical element for the future and that is an estimate of the evolution of the languages spoken in the word and the place

[23] The Independent, London 17-09-2005.

of the language of the Koran in those trends. Today the first five most spoken languages are Chinese, English, Hindi/Urdu, Spanish, and Arabic. The projections for the year 2050 for the age group between 15 and 24 years give the following estimates in millions: Chinese (166), Hindi/Urdu (74), Arabic (77), English (65) Spanish (63) , Portuguese (33)[24].

I always say optimistically, *"Since wars have become the expression of cultural arrogance, cultural humility is now the new name for peace."*[25]

Mutual tolerance is and will always remain the key to survival.

I am attaching an annex where I have selected a very few quotations of what some distinguished Europeans and Westerners wrote about Islam in the past. These are to be compared with what one reads and hears in a great part of the European media today[26].

There is hope when we look back, and there are no reasons why there should not also be hope when we look forward.

Mahdi Elmandjra

Valencia, Spain, 15 September 2005

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[24] Source : Nettle et Romaine (carte) "Les Dix Langues les Plus Parlees" (on the internet).

[25] M. Elmandjra, *"Cultural Communication : Major Challenges of the Future*" in Science and Culture: A Common Path for the Future", UNESCO and The United Nations Symposium, Tokyo, September 1995,

[26] See <http : //www.cyberistan.org/Islamic/qquote1.htm>

ANNEX

Quotations about Islam and the Prophet Mohammed

Thomas Carlyle in 'Heroes and Hero Worship and the Heroic in History,' 1840

"The lies (Western slander) which well-meaning zeal has heaped round this man (Muhammad) are disgraceful to ourselves only."

"A silent great soul, one of that who cannot but be earnest. He was to kindle the world, the world's Maker had ordered so."

Dr. Gustav Weil in "History of the Islamic Peoples" 1843

Muhammad was a shining example to his people. His character was pure and stainless. His house, his dress, his food – they were characterized by a rare simplicity. So unpretentious was he that he would receive from his companions no special mark of reverence, nor would be accept any service from his slave which he could do for himself. He was accessible to all and at all times. He visited the sick and was full of sympathy for all. Unlimited was his benevolence and generosity as also was his anxious care for the welfare of the community.

Reverend Bosworth Smith in 'Muhammad and Muhammadanism,' London, 1874.

"Head of the State as well as the Church, he was Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without the Pope's pretensions, and Caesar without the legions of Caesar, without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a police force, without a fixed revenue. If ever a man ruled by a right divine, it was Muhammad, for he had all the powers without their supports. He cared not for the dressings of power. The simplicity of his private life was in keeping with his public life."

"In Mohammadanism every thing is different here. Instead of the shadowy and the mysterious, we have history....We know of the external history of Muhammad....while for his internal history after his mission had been proclaimed, we have a book absolutely unique in its origin, in its preservation....on the Substantial authority of which no one has ever been able to cast a serious doubt."

Edward Montet, 'La Propagande Chretienne et ses Adversaries Musulmans,' Paris 1890. (Also in T.W. Arnold in 'The Preaching of Islam,' London 1913.)

"Islam is a religion that is essentially rationalistic in the widest sense of this term considered etymologically and historically....the teachings of the Prophet, the Qur'an has invariably kept its place as the fundamental starting point, and the dogma of unity of God has always been proclaimed therein with a grandeur a majesty, an invariable purity and with a note of sure conviction, which it is hard to find surpassed outside the pale of Islam....A creed so precise, so stripped of all theological complexities and consequently so accessible to the ordinary understanding might be expected to possess and does indeed possess a marvelous power of winning its way into the consciences of men."

Mahatma Gandhi, statement published in 'Young India,'1924.

I wanted to know the best of the life of one who holds today an undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind.... I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle. When I closed the second volume (of the Prophet's biography), I was sorry there was not more for me to read of that great life.

Sir George Bernard Shaw in 'The Genuine Islam,' Vol. 1, No. 8, 1936.

"If any religion had the chance of ruling over England, nay Europe within the next hundred years, it could be Islam."

“I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him - the wonderful man and in my opinion for from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Savior of Humanity."

Michael Hart in 'The 100, A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons In History,' New York, 1978.

My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world’s most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the secular and religious level. ...It is probable that the relative influence of Muhammad on Islam has been larger than the combined influence of Jesus Christ and St. Paul on Christianity. ...It is this unparalleled combination of secular and religious influence which I feel entitles Muhammad to be considered the most influential single figure in human history.

W. Montgomery Watt in 'Muhammad at Mecca,' Oxford, 1953.

His readiness to undergo persecution for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked up to him as a leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement - all argue his fundamental integrity. To suppose Muhammad an impostor raises more problems that it solves. Moreover, none of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muhammad.... Thus, not merely must we credit Muhammad with essential honesty and integrity of purpose, if we are to understand him at all; if we are to correct the errors we have inherited from the past, we must not forget the conclusive proof is a much stricter requirement than a show of plausibility, and in a matter such as this only to be attained with difficulty.

Lawrence E. Browne in 'The Prospects of Islam,' 1944

Incidentally these well-established facts dispose of the idea so widely fostered in Christian writings that the Muslims, wherever they went, forced people to accept Islam at the point of the sword.

Jules Masserman in "Who were histories great leaders?" in Time Magazine, July 15, 1974

Perhaps the greatest leader of all times was Mohammad, who combined all the three functions. To a lesser degree Moses did the same.